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## **Border conference to discuss pollution prevention**

By Diana Washington Valdez  
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How to improve the border environment will be the topic of a two-day regional conference Wednesday and Thursday in Santa Teresa.

The Border Pollution Prevention Conference will include a presentation on San Jeronimo, the community on the Mexican side of the border at Santa Teresa.

The Mexican Association of Maquiladoras, the Sandia National Laboratories' Binational Sustainability Laboratory and other agencies that are working on border sustainability initiatives also plan to make presentations.

WERC, Consortium for Environmental Education and Technology Development, is sponsoring the conference. WERC includes New Mexico State University, the University of New Mexico, New Mexico Tech and Diné College in Shiprock, N.M.

"The WERC Border Stakeholder program provides an important forum to build partnerships among industry, small business, academia, educators and non-government organizations to identify ways to improve the environmental quality and health in the Paso del Norte region," said Abbas Ghassemi, WERC's executive director.

Francisco J. Prieto Muñoz of Planning Design and Consultants in Mexico and scientists Gary Jones and Vipin Gupta, from Sandia National Laboratories, are among the speakers on the agenda.

The Sandia scientists have proposed a binational border laboratory at Santa Teresa-San Jeronimo that would identify and work on solutions to border problems.

They envision a facility for Mexican and U.S. scientists working together to improve the border.

Organizers said the conference is part of an ongoing program to promote pollution prevention and energy efficiency in the Paso del Norte region. The program began in January with the Border Stakeholder Workshop, which was attended by more than 100 people.

The June conference will include a field trip to the Santa Teresa border crossing and a showcase of pollution prevention and energy efficient technologies.

As part of the conference, the Environmental Protection Agency's "Border Visions" film will be shown.